

Staff Report on Medical Records

Introduction: Medical Records

On November 25[?], 1963, the *Washington Post* published an editorial that declared that an independent panel should be created to investigate the assassination of President Kennedy. The editorial stated that all steps should be taken to ensure that all relevant facts are collected and made available to the American people. Some congressman opined similarly opined that all information needed to be made available.

It is generally believed that medical evidence is the single most important type of evidence that needs to be collected for a homicide.

Handling of the Medical Records by the Warren Commission

The history of the medical evidence.

The staff believes that medical records are key part of any homicide investigation. The Review Board wanted to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the medical record was as complete and thorough as possible. The single largest problem is the passage of time and the fallibility of memory.

Big question that has divided the country since 1963: was there a shooter from the front. The "official" position has been no, although majority of American people believe that there was a shooter from the front. Medical evidence should be the best way to determine. People who were present at the autopsy disagreed -- although the principal actors believed that the shots were solely from behind.

Problems with the autopsy.

- Not a complete autopsy. (Use manual)

- Shrouded in secrecy.

 - Signed statements.

 - Custer's extreme version of this.

 - Other versions less extreme.

Without reaching any conclusion regarding the ultimate merits, the official position has not taken seriously the significant evidence that would suggest an occipital wound.

There also is significant evidence that there was not major occipital wound:

Witnesses' original statements:

- large defect in back

anterior throat wound

JFK autopsy witnesses

Many of the witnesses have been interviewed many times. Their testimony has changed over time.

WC did a perfunctory examination.

HSCA more thorough, but left many questions unanswered.

Goals:

To get testimony under oath for those who have not testified.

To ask all of the appropriate questions to the key witnesses.

Some of the people who created the records (Riebe, Custer, Reed) had not seen the original material since November 22, 1963. Each of these three had made public comments questioning the authenticity of the Archives records.

Depositions

identify key figures

not to conduct cross examinations, but to do probing examinations

Person asking the question is of course fallible. Anyone who has taken a deposition has recognized a failure to ask a question.

Why not Parkland Doctors